FBIS DAILY REPORT

MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

10 APRIL 1984

Lebanon

The Higher Political Security Committee has approved its subcommittee's plan for the disengagement of forces in and around Beirut and views this as a first step toward ending the fighting, a committee spokesman declared in a statement reported by the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon. The announcement followed a meeting of the committee chaired by President Amin al-Jumayyil, according to Beirut radio. Meanwhile, the contact lines in Beirut were relatively calm after another day of "tension," the radio said.

Syrian Vice President 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam confirmed in a press interview reported by Damascus radio that President Hafiz al-Asad will meet with President al-Jumayyil "shortly."

Israel

Reservist Call-up Exercise — The IDF General Staff announced the start of a public call-up exercise involving the mobilization of four reserve units in an order broadcast by Jerusalem radio.

Suspected Terrorists — Police arrested 4 Jewish men in connection with 14 terrorist attacks on Muslim and Christian holy places over the past 7 months, Jerusalem radio reported.

Syria

Damascus radio, citing "threats" uttered by Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens, charged U.S. instigation of Israel following the U.S. "defeat" in Lebanon and its effort "to cover Syria's great victory with clouds of smoke and threats." Noting that such statements must be taken seriously, the radio added that "we do not rule out the possibility that the U.S. Administration will incite Israel to carry out a military adventure in the region." The United States will be held responsible for any military action undertaken by Israel, which "will certainly not be the side to determine the date the dispute ends."

PLO Affairs

PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat received an "important" written message from Soviet leaders on recent developments in the Middle East during a 2-hour meeting with the Soviet ambassador in Tunis, San'a' Voice of Palestine radio reported citing WAFA. The radio provided no details of the contents of the message. 'Arafat also met with Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in Tunis and discussed the Palestinian cause and recent area developments, San'a' Voice of Palestine radio revealed. Gandhi briefed 'Arafat on steps she has taken as head of the eight-member nonaligned committee to resolve the Palestinian problem and on her recent talks with Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi on the Palestinian issue, Delhi radio reported.

Saudi Arabia

A spokesman for the Saudi Embassy in Washington described as "incorrect" a State Department report that Saudi Arabia is to lease Stinger missiles from the United States to protect the royal yacht, according to SPA.

Iran

Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati arrived in Japan on 10 April and held talks with his Japanese counterpart, Shintaro Abe, IRNA reported. Earlier, Velayati held talks with PRC Foreign Ministry officials during a brief stopover in Beijing, IRNA noted.

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Mujahidin Activities, Recent Fighting Reported

Chesht-e Sharif Seized

LD061123 Riyadh SPA in English 1919 GMT 5 Apr 84

[Text] Islamabad, April 5, SPA — Afghan mujahideen have succeeded in liberating the historic town of Chesht-e Sharif in Afghanistan's north-western Herat Province after fierce battles with Soviet-Afghan forces late last month, the state-run Pakistan television reported here tonight.

Nearly 200 Soviet-Afghan troops were killed and two tanks destroyed during battles at Chesht-e Sharif, the television report said.The television did not give any details about the mujahideen casualties.

Military Post Destroyed

BK061551 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 6 Apr 84

[Text] In Afghanistan, the mujahidin are reported to have killed 19 Soviet-Karmal soldiers in an attack in Balkh Province. In retaliation, the Soviet-Karmal forces bombarded the civilian population in the area. The mujahidin reportedly shot down a Soviet MIG aircraft while it was carrying out bombing operations.

According to another report, the Afghan mujahidin have completely destroyed a military post of the Karmal administration and captured a large quantity of arms and other equipment in Badghis Province.

Chemical Warfare Alleged

BK080439 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 7 Apr 84

[Text] Reports have again come in on the use of chemical weapons by Soviet-Karmal troops against mujahidin in Afghanistan. A news agency, quoting mujahidin in Kandahar, says that during clashes between Soviet-Karmal troops and mujahidin, which have been going on for the last 3 weeks in (Panjgui) Subdivision, chemical gas was used. Another report says hundreds of people have been affected by chemical gas and have become victims of skin and nerve ailments. It is reported that Soviet experts and units trained in the use of chemical weapons were sent to Afghanistan from the Soviet Union last month with new detachments and stationed at important military bases in (Gilgeam), (Shindan), and Qundus.

Soviet Helicopter Downed

BK090638 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0600 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] Reports from Afghanistan say the mujahidin shot down a Soviet military helicopter and damaged a number of tanks in their attack in the mineral-rich border province of Jowzjan. Over 40 Soviet-Karmal soldiers were killed and 11 mujahidin were martyred in this attack.

Subdivision Headquarters Hit

BK091202 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1005 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] Reports from Afghanistan say that 25 Soviet-Karmal troops were killed and a number of tanks and military vehicles damaged in an operation by the Afghan mujahidin at the subdivision headquarters of Spin Buldak last week.

Vardak Mujahidin Commander Explains Operations

LD091722 Paris Domestic Service in French 1100 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text]Since 1979, 100,000 Soviet soldiers have been stationed in Afghanistan. Since the Kabul coup, the Russians have been trying to bring Afghanistan to heel. However, the resistance is organized. Its weapons are not up to the same standard as that of the Red Army, but it untiringly organizes commando operations against the Russian occupier. One of the Afghan resistance leaders is currently in Paris. He is Amin Wardak. How is the resistance organized? What are its hopes for the next few months? Listen to Amin Wardak in his interview with Ulysse Gosset:

[Begin recording] I am Amin Wardak, military commander of the Vardak Province, southwest of Kabul. Within our tribe, called the [word indistinct], there are 80,000 inhabitants. So far, our province has remained free. We, the mujahidin, attack the town of Ghazni and lead actions against the Kabul-Kandahar highway.

[Gosset] Is your main activity attacks against Soviet trucks which carry supplies and against the armored cars which go into the different provinces of Afghanistan?

[Wardak] Yes.

[Gosset] How is this done?

[Wardak] In military terms, we have three different groups of mujahidin. The first group is made up of young commandos between the ages of 18 and 22. We have trained these men very well. In small teams, they attack the convoys and the town. The second group is made up of mujahidin who are there to defend civilians in the village. The third group is made up of mujahidin who guard the mujahidin centers and do the logistics work.

[Gosset] How many men is this in total?

[Wardak] Normally, there is a permanent body of 3,000 mujahidin members who work all the time.

[Gosset]Three thousand people. This is for the military organization. Is there organization at the civilian level?

[Wardak] Yes, of course, the civilian area is the most important. It is a popular ideal and we have to keep our people with us. This is why we have to rebuild schools, hospitals, [word indistinct]

papers, and the assembly. This is also why we have kept our people with us so far and why the Soviets have not succeeded politically or militarily.

[Gosset] Are there any particularly hard battles going on at the moment in Vardak?

[Wardak] Yes. Since the new Soviet president took power, they have changed their tactics. This time they launched a large offensive in five different places. The second thing is that now it is the spring season and the peasants have begun working. During harvest time, before the Soviets came they [words indistinct] or they destroyed. But now there are helicopters which are on guard and wherever they see a peasant, they shoot at him. They kill the peasants. This will be very dangerous for the coming summer, because if the peasants cannot harvest this spring then in the coming summer we will have nothing to eat.

Afghanistan has a 5,000 year-old history. During our history we have been attacked several times by existing armed forces. We received our land free from our parents and we are under obligation to leave the land free for our children. However, unfortunately, during the 4 years since the Soviet invasion [words indistinct] and we have had several hundreds of thousands of deaths. If things continue like this and if we do not receive enough aid, perhaps those who are now still living in Afghanistan will also be killed or obliged to leave the country, little by little. The world must help us, militarily, politically, and financially. [end recording]

Prime Minister Returns From Libya, Tunisia

BK100508 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 10 Apr 84

[Text] The prime minister, Mrs Gandhi, arrived in New Delhi this morning after a 3-day visit to Libya and Tunisia. She was received at the airport, among others, by her ministerial colleagues, members of parliament, and Congress-I leaders.

Speaking to newsmen at the airport, Mrs Gandhi said during her talks with the Libyan leader, Colonel al-Qadhdhafi, and the PLO leader, Mr Yasir 'Arafat, an assessment of the situation in Africa and West Asia was made. Both Mr Qadhdhafi and Mr 'Arafat gave their views on the situation.

In reply to a question on the situation in Punjab, the prime minister said there is the need to create consciousness among the people to solve the problem. The government on its part is making every effort in this direction. It has to be viewed as a national problem, and everyone should make his contribution toward finding a solution.

Earlier, talking to newsmen at the Tunis airport before her departure, Mrs Gandhi described her visit as short but fruitful. She expressed the hope that there would be a quick followup of the ideas initiated during her visit for the mutual benefit of the two countries. Her meeting with the secretary general of the Arab League, Mr Chedli Klibi, covered the Gulf war and the Palestine problem.

Visit Described as Fruitful

BK101015 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 10 Apr 84

[Text] The prime minister has described her visit to Libya and Tunisia as fruitful. Speaking at the airport, she said her talks with the Libyan leader, Colonel al-Qadhdhafi, and the PLO chief, Mr 'Arafat, covered the situation in West Asia and Africa, particularly the Lebanese problem and the Iran-Iraq war.

At the talks, Mrs Gandhi had with Tunisian leaders in Tunis, the two sides were of the view that there is vast scope for closer cooperation in various fields. The Tunisan prime minister, Mr Mohamed Mzali, indicated his country's desire to gain from India's expertise in industrial development. The Tunisian side expressed the fear that Israel may take advantage of the current situation in West Asia and resort to a fresh aggression.

The matter also came up at Mrs Gandhi's meeting with the Arab League secretary general, Mr Chedli Klibi. He urged her to take some more positive initiatives to resolve the West Asia crisis and the Iran-Iraq war. Mr Klibi was particularly apprehensive over the Israeli move to shift some of the foreign missions from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Mrs Gandhi reiterated India's total oppósition to any such proposal.

The PLO leader, Mr 'Arafat, also raised this subject with Mrs Gandhi while briefing her about the developments on the Palestinian issue and the situation in Lebanon. About the need to restore unity in the PLO ranks, Mr 'Arafat said the crisis in the organization has been resolved. Mrs Gandhi explained to the PLO leader various moves she has been making to improve the West Asia situation.

In reply to a question at Delhi airport this morning, the prime minister said the Punjab situation is a national problem and everyone has the responsibility in solving the problem. Mrs Gandhi pointed out that terrorism takes place in most countries, but it is new to us. We must see that it ends as early as possible. A feeling should be created among the people that violence does not pay and it is not in the national interest.

When a newsman expressed the view that the administration perhaps is not equipped to deal with the terrorist activities, Mrs Gandhi said even the countries with far greater resources have not been successful in this regard. In the democratic system like ours, the responsibility lies on the government and the people as well. She added that the government will not shirk from discharging its duty.

Killing, Bomb Attack Reported in Punjab Districts

BK100706 Hong Kong AFP in English 0658 GMT 10 Apr 84

[Text] New Delhi, April 10 (AFP) — Suspected Sikh extremists have shot and killed a village defence agent and attacked a Hindu-religious leader as Premier Indira Gandhi returned home today saying her government would not shirk its responsibility to fight terrorism.

Inder Singh, a retired non-commissioned officer in the Indian Army, was shot dead in his bed in the early hours of today by three men while he slept at his home in Punjab's Amritsar District. The slain man's service rifle had been snatched by his assailants, the PRESS TRUST OF INDIA reported.

The name indicated that Inder Singh was a Sikh. Hardliners in the Sikh action for more autonomy and religious and political rights have often threatened to hit hard at pro-establishment Sikhs too. News reports indicated that the dead man belonged to the village defence force set up in Punjab's villages to combat terrorism.

Meanwhile, as Hindus celebrated the Ram Navami festival under tight security in Delhi and Punjab, a bomb attack was reported on the house of a Hindu religious leader in Punjab's Hoshiarpur District. PTI, reporting from the area, said it was the second time in a year that Durga Dass's house had been attacked with bombs. No loss of life was reported but the building was damaged.

A separate report said police yesterday recovered the body of an unidentified Sikh temple guard from the fields of a village in Bhatinda District. The dead Nihang was found not far from a Hindu temple that had been the target of a bomb attack last Saturday by suspected Sikh extremists.

Mrs. Gandhi, who shortened her foreign visit because of the Punjab violence, returned home today from Libya and Tunisia In an airport press conference, she noted that the Punjab issue was a national problem and sought cooperation all round in

resolving it. She said the acts of terror in Punjab had left the masses cold and they were beginning to realise that continued violence was not in the general interest, she said. The prime minister said her government would not shirk its responsibility in holding down terrorism. It would also try and persuade the people to raise their voice against such acts, she added.

Minister, Dockworker Union Leaders Meet

BK091614 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] The shipping and transport minister, Mr Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy, is understood to have stressed the need for calling off the port and dockworkers strike. He is stated to have given this advice while talking to the INTUC [Indian National Trade Union Congress]-led Indian National Port and Dockworkers Federation leaders, who met him in New Delhi today.

Meanwhile, three federations of striking port and dockworkers affiliated to HMS [Hind Mazdoor Sabha], AITUC [All-India Trade Union Congress], and CITU [Center of India Trade Unions] have informed the shipping and transport minister of their desire for early resumption of negotiations. The three federations are also reported to have passed a resolution expressing their decision to resume talks without any precondition. They have also requested the INTUC-led federation to join them in negotiations.

Sethi Denies Incident at Gandhi's Residence

BK091303 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] The home minister categorically denied in the Lok Sabha today a newspaper report that some extremists had tried to intrude into the residence of the prime minister in New Delhi on the 22d of last month. He said no such incident had taken place. Mr Sethi appealed to the press not to publish such reports without confirmation.

Space Program Moves Into Operational Stage

BK061524 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 6 Apr 84

[Text] India is in a position to design, develop, and fabricate sounding rockets and satellites. According to the performance budget report on the Department of Space for 1984-85, thecountry's space efforts have moved from the building phase tooperational phase on a nationwide scale. The report adds that the country will soon be able to place spacecraft in orbit with its own launch vehicle. The report says the main thrust of the space program in the next 5 years will be toward completing interlinkages between the launch vehicle [and] the satellite and its applications, development, and utilization.

Venkataraman Tells MP's of Need To Equip Navy

BK080501 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 7 Apr 84

[Text] The defense minister has said India has no ambition of a leadership role in the Indian Ocean or any other region, but it cannot help being prepared for any situation that may develop. Mr Venkataraman was addressing the consultative committee of MP's attached to his ministry in New Delhi today. The defense minister shared the concern of the members that the acquisition of sophisticated arms by our neighbors is far in excess of their genuine needs. This aspect, he said, has been taken into account.

Reiterating the need to harness the immense mineral wealth in our exclusive economic zone and the importance of Bombay High, he said the Navy would have to ensure that our assests are not poached upon by others. The time has come to devote greater attention and resources to re-equip the Navy.

The minister of state for defense, Mr K.P. Singh Deo, referred to the benefits announced last year for defense personnel. He said this package cost the government about 42 crore rupees.

Foreign Interest in Developing Weapons Systems Noted

BK061659 Delhi General Overseas Service in English 1330 GMT 6 Apr 84

[Text] A number of advanced countries have shown willingness to collaborate with India in the design and development of complex weapon systems. The lower house of parliament was informed today that this is because the country has made good progress in defense sector.

Major programs have been started on the development of the light combat aircraft and guided missiles. These are based on latest technology and will lead the country toward progressive self-reliance. The house was informed that the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited is expected to earn a profit of [figure indistinct] crore rupees in the year just ended. Members were told that the work on the ordnance factory at Medak, in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, is progressing as scheduled. It will mainly produce infantry combat vehicles.

AFP: Afghan Rebels Release Soviet Officer

OW092059 Hong Kong AFP in English 2046 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] Quetta, Pakistan, April 9 (AFP) — A Soviet Army officer, captured last January by Afghan rebels, was handed over to the Red Cross here today, reliable sources said here.

Lieutenant Konstantin Ivanovich Nikolayev, aged 22, from the town of Brest on the Soviet-Polish border, was caught in a rebel ambush in the southern Afghan province of Helmand.

Under the terms of an agreement between the Afghan rebels, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Pakistani, Swiss and Soviet governments, Lt. Nikolayev will join 11 other Soviet soldiers who have been held in Switzerland for two years.

Former Afghan diplomat turned rebel spokesman Habibullah Karzai said Lt. Nikolayev, a member of the Soviet Communist youth movement Komsomol, had been held and interrogated by the rebels in Pakistan for about two months.

Yaqub Khan, UN Representative Continue Talks

BK091558 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] Two more rounds of talks between the UN secretary general's special envoy on the Afghanistan issue, Diego Cordovez, and Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan were held in Islamabad today. The talks were held in a cordial atmosphere and views were exchanged on some useful aspects. The foreign minister was assisted by Foreign Secretary Niaz A. Naik and senior Foreign Office officials, while Cordovez was assisted by his two aides during the talks.

Zia Notes 'Some Progress' in Talks With Cordovez

BK100424 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 10 Apr 84

[Text] President General Mohammad Ziaul Haq has said there has been some progress in talks with the UN secretary general's special representative on Afghanistan, Mr Diego Cordovez, but it would be premature to say anything more in this regard at present. He was talking to newsmen at Karachi airport prior to his departure for Islamabad last night.

About the recent visit of the Saudi foreign minister to Pakistan, the president said there was nothing extraordinary about this visit. Pakistan has the best of relations with Saudi Arabia and they frequently exchange views on bilateral, regional, and international issues.

A correspondent drew the president's attention to the launching of a satellite by India with Soviet assistance and expressed the fear that Pakistan's defense installations would thereby be exposed to India. The president replied that Pakistan is also trying to acquire space technology, but this technology would be utilized for detecting mineral resources and for other purposes in the national interest. He said Pakistan is making its best efforts to establish good-neighborly relations with India.

In reply to a question, the president said there is nothing to worry about regarding the situation on the eastern border. He said Defense Minister Mir Ali Ahmad Khan Talpur and Law Minister Sharifuddin Pirzada have already explained this in the Federal Advisory Council.

About the incident at Nawabpur near Multan, the president said a summary military court has sentenced the criminals in accordance with the existing laws. Laws will be amended to allow more stringent punishment for such crimes, he added.

The president categorically stated that the decision on banning student unions will not be revised. He said the government is in favor of encouraging extracurricular activities in educational institutions, but students will not be allowed to indulge in politics.

About Pakistan's offer to help Malaysia in setting up a nuclear science training center, the president said Pakistan has offered facilities or training for nuclear scientists of several other Muslim countries as well.

Saudi Foreign Minister Arrives 6 April

BK061713 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1700 GMT 6 Apr 84

[Text] The foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, arrived in Islamabad tonight on a brief visit to Pakistan. He was received by the foreign minister, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan. Senior Foreign Office officials and the Saudi ambassador were also present. During his stay, the Saudi foreign minister will hold talks with his Pakistani counterpart. He will also call on the president.

Confers With Ziaul Haq

LD062212 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2030 GMT 6 Apr 84

[Excerpts] Islamabad, 6 Apr (SPA) — Pakistani President Ziaul Haq conferred this evening with Foreign Minister His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, who arrived in Islamabad earlier today.

Relations between the Kingdom and Pakistan and issues of mutual interest were discussed during the meeting.

The foreign minister is expected to hold official talks tomorrow morning with his Pakistani counterpart. In a statement to SPA correspondent Sahib Zade, the Pakistani foreign minister stressed that the two countries' views are identical concerning the issues of concern to the region. His royal highness arrived earlier today in Islamabad on a 2-day visit to Pakistan and was welcomed by Pakistani foreign minister.

Meets With Yaqub Khan, Departs

BK080239 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1005 GMT 7 Apr 84

[Text] Wide-ranging discussions were held in Islamabad today between the Pakistan foreign minister, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan,

and the Saudi foreign minister, Prince Sa'ud al-faysal. They discussed regional situation, international topics, and subjects of bilateral interest. The forthcoming extraordinary meeting of the Islamic foreign ministers also came up for discussion. The meeting will be held in Algiers.

The Saudi foreign minister has now left for Saudi Arabia.

Turkish Parliamentary Delegation Departs
BK100726 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0600 GMT 10 Apr 84

[Text] Turkish Grand National Assembly President Karaduman says the relationship between the peoples of Turkey and Pakistan dates back centuries and the two peoples are very close to each other despite the geographical distance between the two countries. Mr Karaduman, who headed the Turkish parlamentary delegation, was talking to newsmen at Karachi airport prior to his departure for Istanbul after a 6-day visit to Pakistan.

He said that during this visit the members of the delegation exchanged views with Pakistani leaders, including the president, on matters of mutual interest and that they shared identical views on major international issues, including the Afghanistan problem. He said he was carrying an invitation from President Mohammad Ziaul Haq to Turkish Prime Minister Ozal to visit Pakistan.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Arrives 10 Apr
BK100654 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0600 GMT 10 Apr 84

[Text] Sri Lankan Foreign Minister A.C.S. Hameed arrived in Islamabad this morning on a brief visit to Pakistan. He was received at the airport by the foreign secretary. During his stay in Pakistan, he will call on Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan and will also hold talks with State Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources Dr Asad Mohammad Khan.

President Says Consensus To Decide Elections Basis
BK100136 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1700 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] The president, General Mohammad Ziaul Haq, has said the question about holding the forthcoming elections on party or nonparty basis will be decided by consensus. He was talking to newsmen after commissioning the transmission line at Jamshoro. Replying to a question about the announcement of the election program, the president said it will be done at an appropriate time and his government proposed the minimum time limit.

Replying to another question regarding increase in the number of seats, he said this would be examined by the Election Commission. His government, the president said, will concentrate on doing what it considered best for the integrity, happiness, and prosperity of the country.

Delhi: Zia 'Not Availiable for Next Elections'
BK081148 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 8 Apr 84

[Text] The Pakistan president, General Ziaul Haq, says he has no political ambitions. In an interview to a Bombay monthly, Gen Zia said he will not be available for the next elections.

In reply to a question on Pakistan's nuclear program, he said Islamabad has neither any desire nor the capability of procuring or designing nuclear weapons.

Referring to acquisition of sophisticated weapons, he said it is not a sign of aggressive designs against any country. He said he is ready for a mutual reduction of troops along the border.

Ghafoor Amhad Proposes Broad-based Party Alliance
GF070737 Karachi DAWN in English 3 Apr 84 p 12

[Excerpt] Karachi, April 2 — Prof. Ghafoor Ahmad has urged all the political parties to sink their differences for a broad-based alliance for country's well-being and solidarity.

Speaking at the oath-taking ceremony of newly-elected *JASARAT* Employees Union office-bearers on Monday evening, the Naib Amir [vice president] of the defunct Jamaat-i-Islami said that the country was passing through a difficult period and it was the duty of the political leaders to properly educate the masses about it.

He was confident that the people would regain their constitutional rights and Pakistan would prosper.

He expressed the view that the present rulers should have held political parleys with leaders to resolve what he described as the political impasse and wondered whether the government realised that its image was being tarnished by not doing so.

Prof. Ghafoor was very critical of the curbs on the press. Press and Publications Ordinance continues to exist and there is no sign of the much-publicised code of ethics, he said. There is pre-censorship, the system of press advice control on advertisements, newsprint quotas etc.

The previous governments gagged the press no doubt but did not take false propaganda on the plea of Islamisation, nor obstructed justice, he said while pleading for "respectable living for a journalist who was under paid."

In his presidential address Maulana Fateh Mohammad, amir, Tehreek-i-Islami, Punjab, urged the employees of the *JASARAT* to continue their struggle against press curbs.

Mr Mahmood Azam Faruqi, chief executive of *JASARAT*, warned the authorities that suspension of *JASARAT* advertisement would not deter the daily from raising its voice for the cause of justice.

He said, he was a political leader and his strongly-worded speeches should not be linked with the policy of the newspaper.

At best, he suggested, the authorities should try him under martial law or any other such laws.

Syed Munawar Hasan underlined the need of freedom of conscience and the struggle for civic liberties and fundamental rights.

Commodity Exchange Agreement Signed With USSR

BK080559 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 8 Apr 84

[Text] A commodity exchange agreement and several other documents were signed by Pakistan and the Soviet Union in Moscow. Under the documents signed, the Soviet Union will supply machinery equipment and other commodities to Pakistan and will purchase cotton cloth, ready-made garments, and other commodities of common use from Pakistan.

BANGLADESH

Prime Minister Urges Parties To Join Dialogue

BK090956 Dhaka Overseas Service in Bengali 1700 GMT 8 Apr 84

[Text] Prime Minister Ataur Rahman Khan has called upon political parties to participate in the proposed dialogue without any delay for a (?smooth) transition to democracy. He was addressing a reception given in his honor by the Bangladesh Jatiya League in Dhaka this afternoon. Khan said that with (?sincerity) any problem can be solved through negotiations. He appealed to opposition parties to join the dialogue with an open mind and assured that no problem will remain unresolved.

Referring to various demands of the opposition parties, the prime minister said that most of the demands have been met. He added that if there is any other demand we are ready to discuss and solve it. Khan said that he has joined the government only to assist it in resolving the national crisis and not for any other reason. The [words indistinct] of the Jatiya League presided over the function. The function was addressed among others by Information Minister (?Shamsul Haq), (Azizul Haq Mannania), and Abul Kalam.

7-Party Alliance Agrees To Talk, Presents Demands

BK101001 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 10 Apr 84

[Text] In Bangladesh, the seven-party alliance has agreed to have a dialogue with the military regime on the transfer of power through elections, but it insists that the prime minister, Mr Athaur Rahman Khan, should not be present at the meeting. The alliance leader, Begum Khaleda Zia, conveyed this to the president, Lieutenant General Ershad, in Dhaka. She also presented her 33-point (?charter) of demands for discussion, including the restoration of fundamental rights and the removal of martial law courts.

NEPAL

AFP: Ex-Prime Minister, Opposition MP's Assaulted

BK091354 Hong Kong AFP in English 1340 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] Katmandu, April 9 (AFP) — Former Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa and a group of opposition parliamentarians were assaulted near a town in southwest Nepal where they planned to speak at a rally, an opposition source said today. The source maintained that supporters of Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand had carried out the attack, but sources close to the government denied the allegation. No details were immediately available of injuries to Mr. Thapa and his companions.

The former premier and a group of supporters from the national Panchayat were on their way to Mahendra Nagar in southwest Nepal for a political rally scheduled to be held today.

The source said that Mr. Thapa and his party were ambushed yesterday near the Dhaladi River. A truck blocked the road and a group of men attacked them and smashed their four vehicles, he said.

The Thapa party was forced to walk more than a mile into the town with their faces painted black while their attackers taunted them, the source said.

The local administration subsequently banned the rally on the grounds that rival supporters of Mr. Thapa and Mr. Chand might clash.

Mr Thapa lost the premiership in the middle of last year.

Mr. Thapa has now left Mahendra Nagar, the source added. Among those traveling with Mr. Thapa was the district Panchayat chairman and Mahendra mayor, Nagar Rustaing. Mahendra Nagar is the constituency of Mr. Chand and Commerce and Industry Minister Narayan Dutta Bhatta, whom the Thapa group have accused of hiring the attackers.

SRI LANKA

Jayewardene: Terrorists Aided by International Agencies

BK101148 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 10 Apr 84

[Text] The terrorists are not only bent on seeing a divided country but also have other aims. They have international agencies supporting them. They are attempting to effect a communist revolution. The movement was, therefore, an international movement. President Jayewardene made this observation at a public meeting held at (Boralanda) yesterday. He stressed the need for all citizens to extend their cooperation to the government to fight terrorism. He declared that, despite the terrorist threat, Sri Lanka would never be subdued. We must speak the message all over world that Sri Lankans are a race that cannot be subdued.

He regretted that the opposition today was not giving the government the support it needed in the same way the UNP [United National Party] supported the then government to fight the 1971 insurrection. The people should lend their support to the national security fund set up to fight terrorism.

President Jayewardene reiterated that all races, religions, and political parties, except the TULF [Tamil United Liberation Front], had renounced terrorism.

He concluded with a pledge that he would never allow a single citizen of this country to be enslaved by a foreign power.

Prime Minister R. Premadasa said that all Sri Lankans should come forward to safeguard the country from the threat of terrorism. The terrorists are aiming to provoke the Sinhalese to hinder the Tamils in other areas by creating disturbances in the north. This would lead to disturbances throughout the country. As a result, development activities will be affected.

Mr Premadasa accused that training camps had been set up in Tamil Nadu. However, he added that they were not being assisted by the Indian Government.

Several ministers also addressed the gathering.

National Security Minister Describes Jaffna Events

BK101323 Colombo Domestic Service in English 1245 GMT 10 Apr 84

[Text] The minister of national security, Lalith Athulathmudali, said today that the government had to declare a curfew in the Jaffna municipal area in an attempt to stop violent activities of the northern terrorists.

In a broadcast over all services of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation on the situation in Jaffna, Minister Athulathmudali pointed out that the Armed Forces had been able to stop the terrorist activity. He said that although the terrorists had a plan to attack (Nagajuta) and the (Nagavihara) in Jaffna, action had been taken by the government to ensure the protection of all such places of religious worship.

The minister appealed to the public to extend their fullest cooperation to the government to ensure peace in the country and stop terrorism. The aim of the terrorists, he said, was to create trouble in the Jaffna area and spread violence to other areas in order to draw the attention of the people.

Mr Athulathmudali reiterated the government's determination not to allow the terrorists to succeed and appealed to the public to ensure peace in their respective areas, extending their cooperation to the government to wipe out terrorism from the land.

Explaining the latest terrorist activities in the north, the minister said that the Armed Forces had to shoot seven terrorists in the latest ambush, several others were wounded, and a number of persons had been taken into custoy by the Armed Forces.

The minister disclosed that naval forces in the sea around the Jaffna Peninsula had been strengthened and the government is ready to face any situation.

Delhi Reports Jaffna Tense After Incidents

BK091559 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] In Sri Lanka, the northern provincial capital of Jaffna was tense today after a series of bomb explosions and heavy gunfire this afternoon. The National Security Ministry said in Colombo that the clashes followed an ambush by extremists of an Army platoon. It said one person was killed. However, an agency message quoting unofficial reports says 8 people were killed and 50 wounded in the clashes.

Reports from Colombo say that Sri Lanka's new national security minister, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, will leave for New Delhi on Thursday [12 April] for talks with Indian leaders.

Armed Forces Joint Staff Communique No 1,691

LD091742 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Communique No 1,691 of Joint Staff of Armed Forces of Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] Exchanges of fire continued yesterday in the northwestern operational region with the forces of Islam maintaining their supremacy of fire. Using artillery and mortar fire and the coordinated fire of our heavy weapons units, our forces silenced the enemy's fire, disrupted the traffic of motorized units and troop movements of the Saddamists in this region, and killed a number of Saddam's mercenaries. Exchanges of fire also continued in the western operational region. All along the fronts of this region, our combative units opened fire and halted the engineering activities of the enemy who was attempting to complete entrenchments, build earthworks, and dig foxholes and canals. Our forces opened fire on the enemy's heavy and light vehicles along the logistic axis facing Qasr-e Shirin, Naftshahr, Sumar, and Mehran, inflicting damage and casualties on theSaddamist forces.

Fire exchanges continued sporadically in the southern operational region. The fire was more intense in (Zeyl), (Nahr-e Anbar), and Kushk than in other regions. In this region, activities by enemy patrol groups were identified by our combatants and, following fire from our forces, the enemy was forced to leave. A number of enemy boats, which were being escorted by a number of helicopters and trying to move closer to Majnun Island, were also dispersed by fire from the forces of Islam. Our forces opened fire on enemy positions to the west of the Arvand Rud, stopping enemy combat and engineering activities, halting the traffic of Saddamist vehicles along the Al-Faw-Basra highway, destroying four enemy weapons emplacements, and killing or wounding a number of Iraqi personnel.

The city of Abadan came under fire from enemy long-range weapons;24 houses and shops sustained some damage.

Embassy Officials View Chemical Warfare Display

LD091637 Tehran IRNA in English 1355 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] Tehran, April 9, IRNA — Military attaches of foreign embassies in Tehran and foreign reporters here today inspected fragments of Iraqi chemical bombs in warfronts.

The visit was arranged by the War Information Headquarters and evidence from fragments of bombs attesting to Iraq's engaging in chemical warfare were displayed in a building of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps.

An official from the embassy of the People's Republic of China, commenting on the issue, said use of such weapons at any time and any place was condemned. He stressed that international organisations should take firm measures to ban stockpiling and use of such weapons.

The Chinese Embassy representative commenting on the report of the special team of experts of the United Nations, who investigated evidence of toxic chemicals used by Iraq against Iran, said that although the report of the team did not directly identify the user of these weapons, however, it was unmistakable as to who the report considered the violator.

While inspecting the tell-tale signs of Iraqi chemical warfare, the visitors reacted to the chemical agents by sneezing and coughing. The IRGC and army officials provided the visitors with information on the bombs.

The Yugoslav charge d'affairs commenting on the issue said that undoubtedly Iraq had produced the weapons with assistance of an advanced country. He reiterated that the use of such weapons was internationally banned.

The visitors were shown an unexploded bomb which had already been dismantled. They also reviewed a photo exhibition arranged by the War Information Headquarters on use and effects of the chemical weapons and were also provided with a pamphlet on instances of deployment of these weapons by the Iraqi forces against Iranian Muslim combatants.

Deputy Minister Terms Indian Visit Successful

LD061906 Tehran IRNA in English 1750 GMT 6 Apr 84

[Text] Tehran, April 6, IRNA — Deputy Foreign Minister Hoseyn Sheykh ol-Eslam returned here from his visit to India this evening after handing a message from President Khamene'i to Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi and holding talks with several other Indian officials.

He told reporters at the airport here the president's message mainly stressed on the need for the Non-aligned Movement to take a more "constructive" stand against the Iraqi use of chemical weapons, in order to stop the spread of their use by other countries in the future.

He said his talks in New Delhi were "successful."

Sheykh ol-Eslam added that "the non-aligned countries should be grateful to the efforts of the Islamic Republic for preventing Baghdad from hosting the eighth summit of the Non-aligned Movement.

"The crimes now committed by Saddam would have abased the movement if he had been the chairman of the non-aligned."

He also said his talks with Indian trade and economic officials had paved the way for a future visit by Commerce Minister Abedi Ja'fari to that country.

IRNA Marks Anniversary of U.S. Breaking Relations

LD091202 Tehran IRNA in English 1030 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] Tehran, April 9, IRNA — Four years ago on this day the U.S. Government announced cutting off of relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Such a move by the U.S. came as no surprise for Iran since the Islamic Republic through Muslim students following Imam Khomeyni's path, had practically celebrated beforehand severing of Iran's ties with the U.S. by the taking over of the den of spies (U.S. Embassy) in Tehran some five months earlier.

From the political point of view, cutting off of relations between Iran and the U.S. was taken as a form of punishment for the former, by which it was hoped that its growth and development would become stagnated.

Prior to the severance of ties, the U.S. history in Iran was one of plunder of Iran's wealth and interference in its affairs, nor was it content with meddling in Iran's economic and military matters, but the political and social system of the country as well. [sentence as received]

The pillaging of Iran's resources, systematic destruction of its agriculture and economic and social foundations, parallel to making Iran needy of U.S. agricultural and industrial products was a policy followed by the U.S. in Iran, with the help of its domestic lackeys, until the victory of the Islamic revolution.

Materialisation of the Islamic revolution caught the U.S. statesmen by surprise as was evident in their continued support for the deposed shah and their continued disregard for the Islamic and popular movement in Iran.

Also, with the setting up of the provisional government and the rule of liberals at various governmental levels of the newly formed Islamic Republic, a new era of accomodation with the U.S. was ushered in, which would inevitably have allowed it re-access to the economic resources in Iran as well as renewed political and military interference.

While officially recognising the Islamic Republic, the U.S. started whispering for the resumption of relations with Iran on the basis of ties which could not be treated indifferently by committed Muslim forces who were following Imam Khomeyni's path.

When the danger of the continued meddling in the affairs of Iran by the U.S. became evident and threatened to subvert the revolution, as was indicated at a meeting in Algiers of heads of the provisional government and U.S. officials, forces following the imam's path acted decisively and on Nov. 4, 1979, took over the den of spies, opening a new chapter in the history of the Islamic revolution.

This measure, referred to by Imam Khomeyni as the second revolution, disappointed the U.S. in its last hope to perpetrate its exploitation and unequal ties with the Islamic Republic as it did with that of the overthrown shah.

With their daily gathering in front of the den of spies as a confirmation of the measure taken by the Muslim students following the imam's path, the Muslim nation of Iran exhibited that it wanted no ties with the U.S., as long as it persisted in meddling in Iran's internal affairs, as Imam Khomeyni described it a relationship between a tyrant and an oppressed nation.

In fact, by the taking over of the den of spies, the Islamic Republic put an end to the exploitative relations of the United States with Iran. The U.S. announcement of cutting off relations with Iran, on April 9, 1980, was something which had already been materialized five months earlier.

Hajj Official Says 150,000 Pilgrims To Go to Mecca

LD061253 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 6 Apr 84

[Excerpts] Hojjat ol-Eslam Musavi-Kho'ini, the imam's representative in the hajj pilgrimage organization, in an interview given to our correspondent last night spoke about the organization's actions and plans for carrying out the pilgrimage rites in the current year. With regard to the number of applicants to participate in the pilgrimage rites, he first said: In view of the huge number of applicants it has been decided that more people should be sent to Mecca in the current year. As a result, 150,000 people will go. We hope that in the coming years, after overcoming such problems as the war, we will be able to do more in this respect.

With regard to the agreement by the Saudi Arabian Government about increasing the number of Iranian pilgrims, he said: The problem of pilgrimage is not up to the Saudi Arabian Government and should that government wish to administer the issue of pilgrimage it should be prepared to receive any number of pilgrims. But if it is incapable of carrying out this task, of course, all the other Islamic countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, are prepared to undertake this task.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Arrives

LD072148 Tehran IRNA in English 1840 GMT 7 Apr 84

[Text] Tehran, April 7, IRNA — Sri Lankan Foreign Minister A.C.S. Hameed arrived here today for a two-day official visit heading a high-ranking Sri Lankan delegation. He was welcomed at Tehran Mehrabad Airport by Iran's Foreign Minister Dr. Velayati and a group of Foreign Ministry staffers. The Sri Lankan minister said at the airport that during his stay here he would have meetings with ranking Iranian officials.

Iran's Foreign Minister Dr. Velayati said in an interview here that relations between the two countries are expanding. He added that as a member of the Non-aligned Movement the Islamic Republic of Iran places priority on expanding relations with the Third World nations. He said Iran and Sri Lankan wish to further their friendly relations in political and economic areas. He also expressed confidence that the visit here by the Sri Lankan minister would be a positive step towards further solidifying the ties between the two countries.

Talks With Velayati

LD081503 Tehran IRNA in English 1322 GMT 8 Apr 84

[Text] Tehran, April 8, IRNA — Sri Lanka's foreign minister, A.C.S. Hameed, who arrived here on Saturday for an official

visit held talks this morning with his Iranian counterpart, 'Ali Akbar Velayati on the expansion of mutual relations.

The two parties also discussed various international issues as well as the opening of the Sri Lankan Embassy in Tehran.

The Sri Lankan foreign minister expressed satisfaction over the remarkable expansion of ties between the two countries in the recent years and announced his country's willingness for the exchanges of various delegations to further widen the scope of relations in different fields.

In response Dr. Velayati also welcomed expansion of mutual ties between the two historically friendly countries.

Stopover in Shiraz

GF081843 Shiraz Domestic Service in Persian 1530 GMT 8 Apr 84

[Text] The foreign minister of Sri Lanka arrived in Shiraz at 1815 hours last night and was received by the political-ideological secretary [name indistinct]. The Sri Lankan foreign minister then left for Tehran after a brief stopover.

Meeting With Majlis Speaker

LD081904 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 8 Apr 84

[Text] The minister of foreign affairs of Sri Lanka conferred this morning with the speaker of the Islamic Majlis. The meeting was attended by our country's Foreign Minister Velayati. The Sri Lankan minister of foreign affairs conveyed a message from the Muslim people and officials of Sri Lanka. Referring to the enthusiastic reception given to the proposal to expand mutual relations, he said: Fortunately, these relations are expanding every day. Your country, enjoying authentic Islamic values, has shown its power and succeeded in taking the war to its final stages. This is only to be expected from faith and belief in Islam.

The speaker of the Islamic Majlis, expressing his pleasure at their meeting, said: We welcome the presence of representatives of Islamic countries in our country. From the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran up until now, our policy has been to expand and increase our relations with our neighboring countries and other Third World and Muslim countries. We have always acted according to this policy. I hope your presence in Iran and your meetings with our officials will be successful so we may expand mutual relations to protect the interests of the two countries and so you can take back glad tidings to your people.

Session With President Khamene'i

LD091631 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] Mr A.C.S. Hameed, foreign minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, met and conferred today with President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i. In the course of this meeting, at which Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and the charge d'affaires of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Sri Lanka were also present, the Sri Lankan foreign minister conveyed warm greetings of the president and the nation of Sri Lanka to our country's president and expressed hope for the further strengthening of friendly ties and expansion of political, economic,and cultural relations between the two countries.

Referring to the need for cooperation and closer links between the countries with common interests and common problems, President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i said: There are many common points of interest between Sri Lanka and the Islamic Republic of Iran which can be used for the strengthening and development of relations between the two countries in the political, economic, and technical spheres.

The president added: Without coordination among the nations and governments, the major powers would be able to expand their presence and sphere of influence to the territory of independent countries, which would reduce the breathing space of these countries.

Referring to the sensitivity of the Indian Ocean zone, the president added: Despite the fact that the international organizations have declared the Indian Ocean a neutral and nonmilitary zone, there is still military presence in large parts of this ocean and the Sea of Oman, which are vital and very sensitive areas of this region. The president added: This presence has assumed an aggressive form and has become objectionable. So we welcome coordination and closer links among the friendly countries and those countries interested in pursuing their own independent policies. In this connection, we declare our readiness to expand relations with your country.

Prime Minister's Reception

LD091901 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 9 Apr 83

[Excerpt] Foreign Minister of the Sri Lankan Socialist Republic A.C.S. Hameed this morning met with Prime Minister Mir-Hoseyn Musavi. In this meeting, matters of mutual interest, bilateral cooperation, especially commercial and econmic relations, international issues, and issues concerning the southeast Asia region were discussed.

9 April Departure

LD091857 Tehran IRNA in English 1750 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] Tehran, April 9, IRNA — The Sri Lankan foreign minister A.C.S. Hameed and his accompanying delegation left here after a two-day stay. In a short interview at the airport, the Sri Lankan official described as successful his trip and his meetings with Iranian authorities.

Mr. Hameed met and conferred with President 'Ali Khamene'i, Majlis Speaker 'Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, Commerce Minister Hasan Abedi Ja'fari and Oil Minister Mohammad Gharazi of the Islamic Republic during his stay.

The Sri Lankan foreign minister leading a political and economic delegation arrived here on April 7th.

Velayati Meets President Prior to Far East Trip

LD091103 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 9 Apr 84

[Text] On the eve of his departure for Japan and Malaysia, Foreign Minister Velayti met with President Khamene'i. In the course of the meeting, the president issued certain guidelines to the foreign minister.

According to our correspondent, Foreign Minister Velayati, leading a high-ranking political-economic delegation, left for Japan and Malaysia this afternoon. Before his departure,he spoke to our correspondent about the aims of the visits, saying that they are taking place in response to official invitations extended by the foreign ministers of Japan and Malaysia. He added that during the visits, in view of the various possibilities available in connection with the economic, commercial, oil, and cultural issues, talks will be held with the officials of those countries.

Coverage of Visit

For KYODO accounts of the visit to Japan by Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, including his talks with Japanese Foreign Minister Shintario Abe, see the Japan section of the 10 April Asia & Pacific *DAILY REPORT* and subsequent issues.

Bani-Sadr Explains Break With Resistance Council

PM061520 Paris LE MONDE in French 5 Apr 84 p 4

[J.G. report: "Iran: Split Between Former President Bani-Sadr and Mas'ud Rajavi"]

[Text] "We have reached a situation where it is preferable for each of us to go his own way and to enjoy complete freedom of action." It was with this cryptic comment that Mr Bani-Sadr explained to us his break with Mas'ud Rajavi, chairman of the National Resistance Council (NRC), one of the groups in opposition to the Tehran regime, and leader of the Mojahedin-e Khalq.

The break was announced last Saturday in a very laconic NRC communique which, while praising the "2 years, 8 months of cooperation between the two Iranian leaders," stated that "under present conditions cooperation between Mr Bani-Sadr and the NRC seems virtually impossible, and it has been agreed to end their political coalition in its present form."

Receiving us at his modest apartment at Cachan, where he has been living for the past 2 weeks since leading Auvers-Sur-Oise, where he shared Mas'ud Rajavi's house, Mr Bani-Sadr declined to say anymore about it. "Of course," he admitted, "there are divergences between us, but we have agreed not to discuss them publicly, so as to preserve future chances. In any case, our objectives remain the same: We want Iran to recover its independence and its democracy."

Indeed, the reasons for the "friendly disagreement" between Mas'ud Rajavi, the driving force behind the NRC, and Bani-Sadr, its standardbearer, are basically connected with the delicate problem of the Council's relations with the Iraqi regime. In January 1983, Mr Rajavi met with Iraqi Deputy Premier Tariq 'Aziz during the latter's stopover in Paris. On that occasion, 'Aziz said that he would be pleased to see his "dear friend" Mas'ud Rajavi "become the next prime minister or president of Iran."

These remarks, inopportune to say the least, profoundly shocked Bani-Sadr who has always been cautious about cooperating with a state at war with his own country and has not forgotten that 10 years ago he himself waged that war in his capacity as chief of the Iranian army. Tariq 'Aziz's remarks were also interpreted at the time as a disowning of Bani-Sadr who, under the terms of the NRC Charter, should in principle become provisional president of a republic installed in Tehran following an overthrow of Imam Khomeyni's regime.

This difference of opinion regarding the appropriateness of cooperation with Baghdad seems later to have weighed heavily on relations between the two Iranian leaders. The issue of the chemical weapons apparently used by Iraq has also helped to highlight these differences. The NRC confined itself in its communique to condemning "the use of chemical weapons by the warring sides," without specifically accusing Iraq.

But according to Mr Bani-Sadr, who sent a letter of protest Friday to the UN secretary general, there is no doubt Baghdad has used chemical weapons against Iranian troops. "I believe," he told us in this connection, "that the proof is overwhelming. When the Iraqi military leaders talk about exterminating 'noxious insects' they are unwittingly betraying the fact that they have already resorted to chemical weapons. In any case, Baghdad has always said that it possesses a formidable secret weapon. We now know what it is. It is a very serious matter because it has created a dangerous precedent which could be exploited by the mullahs, who are more cruel than Saddam Husayn, to use this dangerous weapon themselves."

Be that as it may, Bani-Sadr's friendly departure will help to further radicalize the NRC. Some opposition groups, such as the fedayeen minorities, the Maoists, and the Komeleh (a Marxist-Leninist Kurdish group) have long been encouraged to join the Council. They have declined mainly on the basis of the presence within it of Mr Bani-Sadr, considered by them a moderate who cooperated for a long time with the Tehran regime. The departure of the former Iranian president seems to open the way for them to join the NRC.